Seniors' News

Seniors' Secretariat

Giving Nova Scotia's Seniors a Voice Volume 121 September 2007

A message from the

Honourable Carolyn Bolivar-Getson, Minister of Seniors

The recent release of the 2006 census results indicates that Nova Scotia has one of the oldest populations in Canada. As Minister of Seniors, I am pleased to note that these numbers do not catch us unaware. At the Seniors' Secretariat, we have been working on a number of initiatives to prepare for the increased aging population for some time; and our initiatives show that we are well on our way to creating a positive and age-friendly environment to fit with the approaching demographics.

As part of our Seniors Healthy Active Living Initiative, we are collaborating with the Department of Health Promotion and Protection on the *Connecting Seniors to Healthy Living* Report, led by Recreation Nova Scotia (RNS). The project lays the groundwork for improving active living and physical activity levels of older adults in Nova Scotia. The executive summary will be widely released this fall and the full report is available by request.

The province continues to pay special attention to the issue of senior abuse in Nova Scotia by providing seniors, family members and caregivers with a one-on-one connection to staff trained to deal with the issues surrounding senior abuse. Since the launch of our senior abuse toll-free line in June, there has been an over 100 per cent increase in calls related to senior abuse. While this number may appear distressing, it is an indication that our education and awareness campaign is working.

As part of the secretariat's work with the Age-Friendly Cities Project, we will be heading to London this October for the release of the *World Health Organizations Age-Friendly Cities Guidebook*; joining representatives from all 33 participating urban centres from across the globe. Following various income and gender-specific protocols, local seniors, caregivers, and community leaders were called on to identify what "age-friendly" means. In each participating city an interactive team of seniors looked at issues related to health, safety, independence, participation in the community, leisure

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Seniors' News

Giving Nova Scotia's Seniors a Voice

The secretariat newsletter is published four times a year by the Seniors' Secretariat and distributed free of charge. We welcome letters, articles, and items of interest from you. Please include your name, address, and telephone number on all correspondence. The Seniors' Secretariat was established in 1980 to facilitate the planning and development of services and programs for seniors by coordinating plans, policies, and programs presented by the departments of the provincial government. The secretariat serves as a one-door entry to government for seniors, seniors' groups, and other provincial bodies concerned with aging issues. The secretariat develops plans, policies, and programs in partnership with other levels of government and agencies responsible for seniors.

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Seniors' Secretariat

NOVA SCOTIA

programs, affordable and accessible seniors' housing, accessibility to public and private spaces, and employment opportunities.

These are just a few of the projects that are currently underway as the Seniors' Secretariat works to ensure this province is even more understanding and supportive of our seniors. This fall, I look forward to working with my colleagues in the house to implement more of the societal actions as outlined in the *Strategy for Positive Aging in Nova Scotia*. We will continue to address issues and continue to make Nova Scotia even more age-friendly.

Sincerely,
Carolyn Bolivar-Getson
Minister of Seniors

A message from

Valerie White, Seniors' Secretariat Chief Executive Officer

Autumn is a season of change and a time of thanksgiving. With summer vacations behind us and our busy routines set in place, it is time to pick up our work on established plans and set in motion brand new initiatives.

The seniors' literacy programs will restart this fall and we are excited that we will again be able to distribute funds to literacy networks and seniors' partners that are looking to put on a senior's literacy programs. For more information on funding or senior's literacy programs contact Marguerite McMillan, seniors' literacy coordinator, **(902)-424-5329** or **1-800-670-0065**.

We are looking forward to the upcoming fall consultation on October 17, which is a forum for updating and introducing information and programs to representative from various seniors' organizations. It is great opportunity for the Seniors' Secretariat to stay in touch with all of our stakeholders, and provides an opportunity to bring concerns forward and discuss common issues.

Recently, the Seniors' Secretariat had the opportunity to partner with the Halifax Regional Municipality and the Nova Scotia Centre on Aging at Mount Saint Vincent University on the Age-Friendly Cities Project, an international initiative organized by the World Health Organization. A useful guidebook will be launched on October 1 in London, England.

In September we will hold the second meeting of the 16-member interdepartmental working group for the Action Plan for Positive Aging. The group was asked to become familiar with the 190 societal actions contained in the strategy, to identify the provincial government's role in implementing them, and to measure the government's progress since the release of the strategy in December 2005.

The Seniors' Secretariat is the key sponsor for the second Tools for Life conference and exhibit, being held at Horton High School,

Greenwich on Friday October 26, 2007. This event is open to the public and is designed to support overcoming barriers to living, learning, and working for all ages. I am delighted to be presenting on how "designing for all" can have a profound impact on the social and economic progress of our province.

October 1 is also the International Day of the Older Person, a day for global recognition of seniors and elders. The Seniors' Secretariat would like to express our appreciation to the seniors, families, and care providers of this province. It is so appropriate that this day falls in the month of Thanksgiving because we are so thankful for all that you do.

Yours,
Valerie White
CEO, Seniors' Secretariat

You say, "If I had a little more, I should be very satisfied." You make a mistake. If you are not content with what you have, you would not be satisfied if it were doubled.
– Charles Haddon Spurgeon

SECRETARIAT NEWS

Silver and Spectacular

By Carolyn Bolivar-Getson, Minister of Seniors

Words like grey and gloomy were used recently to describe Nova Scotia's aging population. Words like silver and spectacular would have been more accurate and far more helpful.

We cannot dispute the census 2006 data released in July. Nova Scotia is the oldest province in Atlantic Canada, and the second oldest in Canada. And the population of seniors in Nova Scotia is projected to double within the next 20 years. But when these statistics are described with words like grey, glooming, burden, and nightmare, the negatives are grossly exaggerated and the positives completely ignored.

When we allow ageist attitudes to go unchallenged, we devalue the knowledge, experience and skills of seniors. We discourage their participation in society and we lose a vital resource.

To provide a more balanced view, it's worth noting that seniors are the most generous segment of the population, giving more of their time and money to support quality of life.

Seven per cent of Canadians contribute 73 per cent of all volunteer hours. Seniors comprise the majority of that seven per cent, and older seniors (75 and older) contribute the most hours.

Seniors also donate more than two per cent of household expenditures to charity – almost five times the rate of people younger than 55.

Seniors pay taxes and contribute enormously to their families through financial support and valuable in-kind contributions such as child care.

Furthermore, only four per cent of Nova Scotia seniors live in nursing homes. Yet the pictures that accompany stories about seniors often focus on the oldest, most frail and infirm. This is a severely distorted view of a diverse age group that can span 40 years.

The negative aspects of aging cannot be ignored, but decline and social exclusion are not an inevitable part of old age. And while health problems can prevent some seniors from participating fully in community life, for the majority, such participation actually prevents health problems.

It's also important to point out that population aging is being experienced by all industrialized nations. In fact, Canada doesn't even rank among the 20 oldest countries in the world, which gives us the advantage of learning from others.

Calling this a crisis is premature and counter-productive. We emphasize a positive approach, and we called our 10-year guide for planning for Nova Scotia's aging population the *Strategy for Positive Aging in Nova Scotia*. A first in Canada, the strategy reinforces that aging is both a personal and a societal issue. It promotes individual responsibility while addressing the broader role families, communities and governments play in providing the supports seniors need to age positively.

Census data gives us a picture of today's population and helps us make projections about the future. By responding appropriately, we can change the future. We can, for instance, improve the health of Nova Scotians, ensure community infrastructure is age-friendly, expand in-home supports to extend independence and assist businesses in reaching new markets and developing workplace policies to recruit and retain older workers.

Our government is making solid progress in all these areas. For example, Nova Scotia is playing a key role in global and national initiatives, such as Age-friendly Cities and Age-friendly Rural and Remote Communities, which will release guide books in October to help municipalities provide the types of communities seniors need to remain healthy, active and engaged.

Our government passed legislation to eliminate mandatory retirement and the Public Service Commission is leading by example with workplace policies that increase diversity, assist employees with elder-care responsibilities, promote life-long learning and recognize the important value of healthy workplace programs.

Meanwhile, our Continuing Care Strategy is increasing the number of long-term-care beds, while also placing an important emphasis on ensuring seniors are able to remain in their own homes for as long as possible.

A Caregivers Strategy – another first in Canada – is being developed to recognize the vital contribution of unpaid caregivers and recommend ways government can better support their work.

And next year, we will host North America's first Silver Economy Conference to bring businesses and other sectors together to hear from global experts and explore the many opportunities for economic gains that come with population aging.

These are just a few examples of work directly linked to our Strategy for Positive Aging in Nova Scotia, which more than 1,000 Nova Scotians helped create. Implementing the strategy is why our government announced in April that the Seniors' Secretariat will become the Department of Seniors, with a substantial budget increase to support this important work.

Population aging impacts every aspect of our society and everyone has a role to play. As famed former Notre Dame football coach Lou Holtz once said, "ability is what you're capable of doing. Motivation determines what you do. Attitude determines how well you do it."

As Minister of Seniors, Minister Responsible for the Office of Immigration, the Council of the Status of Women, and the Public Service Commission, I handle key portfolios focused on providing a co-ordinated response to demographic change in Nova Scotia.

But it is the attitude of all Nova Scotians toward aging that will determine how well our province responds to demographic change.

The Strategy for Positive Aging in Nova Scotia is available on the Seniors' Secretariat website **www.gov.ns.ca/scs** or by calling **1-800-670-0065**.

This originally appeared in the *Halifax Herald*, July 26, 2007.

Information Resource Centre

The Information Resource Centre at the Seniors' Secretariat has a collection of books and videos on the subject of aging that is available for borrowing throughout Nova Scotia. Material may be borrowed by contacting the librarian at **1-800-670-0065** or **424-4710**, or **scs@gov.ns.ca**.

The list below includes some of the most recently added titles. A complete list of material in the Information Resource Centre can be mailed to you by contacting the above, or from the Secretariat's website at **www.gov.ns.ca/scs**, then click on "About the Secretariat", then on "Services" and follow the link.

Recent Titles

The Art of Aging: a doctor's prescription for well-being by Sherwin B Nuland, Random House, 2007.

From the front flap – The onset of aging can be so gradual that we are often surprised to find that one day it is fully upon us. The changes ... are undeniable – and rarely welcome – and yet as Nuland shows, getting older has its surprising blessings. Age concentrates not only the mind, but the body's energies, leading many to new bursts of creativity, perceptiveness, and spiritual intensity. Growing old is not a disease but an art – and for those who practice it well, it can bring extraordinary rewards.

Civic Engagement and The Baby Boomer Generation: Research, Policy, and Practice Perspectives edited by Laura B. Wilson, 2006.

The Emotional Survival Guide for Caregivers: Looking After Yourself and Your Family While Helping An Aging Parent by Barry J. Jacobs, Guilford Press, 2006.

Fitness Over Fifty: An Exercise Guide from the National Institute On Aging, Hatherleigh Press, 2006.

Grandparent-Grandchild: Access: Discussion Paper, Law Reform Commission of Nova Scotia, 2007.

How To Say It To Seniors : Closing the Communication Gap With Our Elders by David Solie, Prentice Hall, 2004.

Involving Older People: Lessons for Community Planning by Belinda Dewar, Scottish Executive Social Research, 2004.

Multidisciplinary Elder Abuse Prevention Teams: A New Generation by Lisa Nerenberg, National Committee for the Prevention of Elder Abuse (NCEA), 2003.

A Portrait of Seniors in Canada 2006 by Martin Turcotte, Statistics Canada, 2007.

The Road to Eden North: How Five Canadian Long-term Care Facilities Became Eden Alternatives, CHA Press, 2004.

The Role of The Outdoors in Residential Environments for Aging, Haworth Press, 2005.

Senior Centres in Canada: A Study Prepared for The Canadian Institute of Senior Centres by Betty Lyn Enns, Canadian Institute of Senior Centres, 1991.

Thriving on an Aging Workforce: Strategies for Organizational and Systemic Change, Krieger Publishing, 2005.

When Roles Reverse: A Guide to Parenting Your Parents by Jim Comer, Hampton Roads, 2006.

Website Renovations

The Seniors' Secretariat website has undergone some major improvements and changes following a survey done last summer. The survey gathered the thoughts and ideas concerning the website from our internal and external stakeholders.

The main objective of the website's new design was to provide information to seniors by having the material and structure be more user friendly. We also took into account the target audience is mainly seniors, their family members and care providers. It was also extremely important that the website have a fresh new look that reflects the Seniors' Secretariat's positive approach to aging.

Christiane Harada, a computer sciences co-op student from Saint Mary's University, embraced the task of revamping the entire website beginning with the site map. In May 2007, she began to research other seniors focused websites to help create the design of our new one.

The major changes to the website include widely expanded content and information, a redesigned site map, new informative FAQ's, and

Christiane Harada working on the new website.

a photo album with pictures from various secretariat events across the province. A well organized layout that includes an easier to navigate home page, brighter colours, and more information make the website more inviting and easier to use.

An option to select easy to read font sizes was also added to the home page. To increase the font to a level that is most comfortable for the reader, just select one of the A's from the top right hand corner of the page and the font size will increase or decrease.

A new form has been added to the website for the *Programs for Seniors Guide* so interested organizations and services can add, update or delete their information listed in the guide. The form is available by clicking the update button on the homepage.

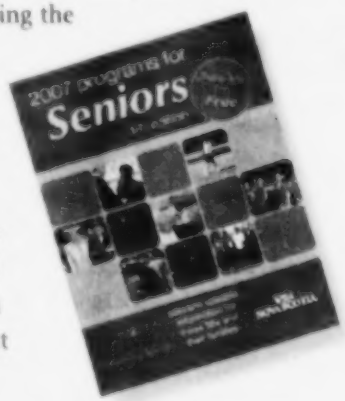
Options like these are enabling us to offer more convenient and useful web services. With the website roll-out planned for this fall we hope to have many more people taking advantage of the site and its resources.

For more information visit **www.gov.ns.ca/scs** or contact the Seniors' Secretariat at **1-800-670-0065** or **(902) 424-0065**.

Programs for Seniors

Programs for Seniors is a directory of programs, services, and information for seniors and their families. Presently, 75,000 copies are made available throughout the province free of charge. In addition to print copies, the 2007 edition of *Programs for Seniors* is currently available for viewing online. Access to this annual publication via the Nova Scotia Seniors' Secretariat's website provides Internet users with instant access to a PDF copy of the directory.

Recently, a new feature was added to the website which allows for agencies and organizations to submit revisions to their current entries in *Programs for Seniors* with an online form. If you would like to submit updates or inquire about having a new entry in *Programs for Seniors* using the online form, please visit the website at **www.gov.ns.ca/scs** and click on the link, *Programs for Seniors – Update Form*. We are pleased to provide this option as it generates a convenient and efficient method of providing updates online.



Currently, updates are being compiled for the 19th edition of the *Programs for Seniors* publication, which is expected to be available for distribution in early 2008. A sincere thank you to those who continue to provide updated information, helping to ensure that the 2008 *Programs for Seniors* is an accurate and current resource for Nova Scotia seniors and their families.

Claire Patriquin receiving her Remarkable Seniors' Award from CEO Valerie White.

Remarkable Senior

In June 2007 seven incredible seniors received awards for their outstanding contributions to their families and communities. Claire Patriquin was unable to attend the ceremony, so in August CEO of the Seniors' Secretariat, Valerie White presented her with the award and a bouquet of flowers at a ceremony hosted at the Secretariat office.

Claire is an outstanding citizen who is dedicated to bringing joy to those around here, and we are grateful for the opportunity to acknowledge such an inspiring person.

Congratulations!

Yes... being young is beautiful, but being old is comfortable.

– Unknown

Group of IX: Comings and Goings

The Seniors Secretariat says goodbye to Group of IX chair, Phil Hughes, who completed his term of office in June.

Phil has been a member of the Nova Scotia Retired Teachers Organization for the past 10 years, after retiring from a 30 year career as a teacher. He was president and then past president of the organization, which led him to his position as chair of the Group of IX for the past 4 years. His dedication and commitment to the group has been outstanding, and we will truly miss him.

As Phil leaves his position we are happy to introduce Bernie LaRusic as the new chair for the Group of IX.

Bernie retired from the Nova Scotia Department of Education after 30 years as a teacher in adult education. During his working career, his activities focused on improving the working conditions and living environment of employees.

Phil Hughes holds "Good Luck" cake with Seniors' Secretariat CEO Valerie White at his last Group of IX meeting in June.

In 2000 he was elected president of the Nova Scotia Government Retired Employees Association (NSGREA) which put him on the Group of IX. Since 2003, he has been vice-chair and this year he has accepted the position as chairperson.

Bernie's intention is to maintain the mandate of the group as it relates to the seniors of Nova Scotia. With the Senior Secretariat having the main responsibility of moving the recommendations and social actions on positive aging forward, he feels there is an important role for the Group of IX to play. It would appear his focus on the condition of others has moved up a notch, to seniors.

Good luck Phil and welcome Bernie!

Upcoming Events

Staying Healthy in Mid-Life and Beyond

The HEALTH Committee from the Centre for Health Care of the Elderly

QEII Health Sciences Centre presents the 2007–2008 Health Information Series.

Guest speakers will address Prostate Health, Am I Losing my Memory, Scams and Frauds, and other issues of interest to seniors, their families and caregivers. Questions and discussion will follow the presentations. Refreshments are provided.

The following Mondays, 1:30–3 pm, Royal Bank Theatre, QEII, Summer Street, Halifax:
September 24, 2007
October 22, 2007
November 26, 2007
February 25, 2008
March 31, 2008
April 28, 2008
May 26, 2008
June 23, 2008

The presentations are broadcast throughout Nova Scotia via the TeleHealth network. Outside HRM, you can attend by visiting one of the following TeleHealth sites:

- Eastern Kings Memorial Community Health Centre (Wolfville)
- Bayview Memorial Health Centre (Advocate Harbour)
- Cumberland Regional Health Care Centre (Amherst)
- All Saints Springhill Hospital (Springhill)
- Colchester Regional Hospital (Truro)
- Aberdeen Hospital (New Glasgow)
- St. Martha's Hospital (Antigonish)
- Cape Breton Regional Hospital (Sydney)
- Additional TeleHealth sites will be determined.

For brochures, posters and information call **(902) 473-8603.**

Canadian National Institute for the Blind 50+ Workshops

The CNIB Research department is in the final stages of completing a Canadian vision health guide, entitled *You and Your Vision Health: Yes! Something More Can Be Done.* As part of the dissemination process we are holding 50+ workshops for seniors across the country between July 2007 and June 2008 to promote vision health.

Please join us at one of our upcoming workshops in partnership with CARP (Canada's Association for the 50 Plus) in Nova Scotia

to receive a free copy of *You and Your Vision Health: Yes! Something More Can Be Done.* Workshops will take place in Halifax, Sydney, and Kentville in early September. For dates, locations and more information, please contact: Morgan Ineson at CNIB Research, **(416) 486-2500 ext. 7657, morgan.ineson@cnib.ca** or Susan Cameron from CARP, **sentinel@ns.sympatico.ca.**

55+ Games

The 2nd Nova Scotia 55+ games will be held in Truro, September 27-30, 2007. A variety of sports and activities are planned, including 8-ball, 45s, arts and crafts, badminton, candlepin bowling, carpet bowling, contract and duplicate bridge, cribbage, crokinole, curling, darts, golf, hockey, horseshoes, Scrabble, skip-bo, slo-pitch , swimming, tennis, timed walk, Uno, and washer toss.

The Annual General Meeting of the Nova Scotia 55+ Games Society will be held at the Nova Scotia Sports conference room, 5516 Spring Garden Road, 2nd Floor, on Friday, November 23, commencing at 1:30 pm. All "seasoned citizens" with a zest for life are cordially invited to attend.

For more information contact Peter Nordland at **(902) 638-8009** or **nordland@ns.sympatico.ca**

Glow With Us

Show your support for family caregivers!

To spotlight family/friend caregivers – light up their lives and show appreciation for their valuable contributions by putting up Christmas lights in your window at 8:00 pm on October 1. Turn them on for the evening. It really is that simple!

Please tell your friends and help us make this annual international event a success!

For more information go to **www.caregiversns.org**

International Day of the Older Person

The General Assembly of the United Nations designated October 1 as International Day of Older Persons. Celebrate the day in your own way!

Tools for Life Conference and Exhibit

Overcoming Barriers: making living, learning and working easier

Friday, October 26, 2007 from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm at Horton High School in Greenwich. Key note speakers include Valerie White, Chief Executive Officer, Seniors' Secretariat, and the Honourable Judy Streatch, Minister of Community Services. There is no cost, but advance registration recommended.

The Tools for Life Conference and Exhibit aims to provide consumers, professionals, organizations, and businesses the opportunity to exchange wellness information, ideas, strategies, and tools to address barriers, and enable people to scale new heights, take better care of themselves, and achieve goals they never thought possible. Educational sessions are offered by presenters and exhibitors from around the province covering a range of topics, programs, technologies, and services.

These sessions are intended to assist and support people of all ages and abilities including people with impairments, disabilities and health challenges as well as family members, caregivers, health professionals and educators. Conference themes are wellness and independent living; literacy and lifelong learning; and employability and career. For more information visit **www.nsnet.org/vdp** or call **(902) 679-7469.**

Alzheimer Disease and Other Dementia Care Course

The Alzheimer Disease and Other Dementia Care is providing a course intended to help meet the overwhelming need for caregivers and providers. The course will be held on September 12 – November 7, 2007 at the Nova Scotia Association of Health Organizations (NSAHO) 2 Dartmouth Road, Bedford. There is a registration fee of $150. plus HST.

For more information phone **(902) 832-8500 ex 249** or **vanda@nsaho.ns.ca**. A detailed description of course dates and information is available in the article *Alzheimer's Disease and other Dementia Care Courses*, in the Caregiving and Health section.

Parkinson's: What You Need to Know

The Parkinson's Society Maritime Region will be offering a 2-hour session for Health Care Professionals. The session will be held on October 19, 2007, from 2:00 pm – 4:00 pm at the Holiday Inn Select in Halifax. There is a registration fee of $29.

An overview of Parkinson disease will be provided covering such topics as:

- Communication/speech and swallowing
- The importance of exercise/activity to improve and maintain mobility
- Medication management
- Cognitive impairment and challenging behaviours
- Other non-motor symptoms
- Tips and strategies to make your job, as a care provider, easier, and to ensure the best quality of life for the person living with Parkinson's

For additional information on the above or the full conference contact Denise Hubley, Parkinson Society Maritime Region **(902) 422-3656** (metro) or **1-800-663-2468**, **dhubley@parkinsonmaritimes.ca** **www.parkinsonmaritimes.ca**

Caregiver's Handbook

The handbook is a helping hand for families and friends giving care in Nova Scotia, it is written in clear language and filled with advice for unpaid caregivers. It includes information topics relevant to those who give and receive unpaid care. The handbook was developed to serve all Nova Scotians and was created with the help of caregivers from diverse communities, under the grant-paid project the Healthy Balance Research Program.

The Caregiver's Handbook will be released officially in a ceremony at 10:30 am on Thursday, September 13 at the Four Points Sheraton hotel in Halifax. Following the launch, copies will be available from the Healthy Balance Research Program at the following locations:

- The Atlantic Centre of Excellence for Women's Health
  502-1465 Brenton St.
  Halifax, Nova Scotia B3J 3T4
  Phone: **(902) 494-7850**
  E-mail: **acewh@dal.ca**
- Caregivers Nova Scotia
  7001 Mumford Road, Tower 1, Suite 105
  Halifax, Nova Scotia B3L 4N9
  Phone **1-877-488-7390** (toll free in the province)

For more information on the caregivers handbook contact Stephanie Mason, coordinator of the Healthy Balance Research Program at **(902) 494-7856** or **stephanie.mason@dal.ca**

POSITIVE LIVING

Age-friendly Cities Project

Halifax Regional Municipality is engaged in a World Health Organization project to help make the world friendlier for seniors. The Nova Scotia urban centre is one of 33 communities around the globe enlisted by the World Health Organization to participate in a research project aimed at addressing the increasing population over the age of 60, and making the communities they live in more responsive to their needs.

"An age-friendly city ensures that a culture of inclusion is shared by people of all ages and ability levels," said Carolyn Bolivar-Getson, Minister of Seniors. "This project closely aligns with our work on the Strategy for Positive Aging. It is a progressive approach to responding to demographic aging and community development."

Valerie White, Nova Scotia Senior's Secretariat CEO, first learned about the project at a conference in 2006 and soon thereafter approached Mayor Peter Kelly about joining with the Secretariat on the global project. Sharing Ms. White's vision of the project's significance to the municipality and the province, Mayor Kelly promptly signed on.

"We want HRM to be a leader in finding creative ways to serve our ever-expanding senior population," said HRM Mayor Peter Kelly. "This study provides important insights into needs and possible solutions that will help us become the age-friendly municipality we strive to be. We look forward to learning even more when the full WHO report is released this fall."

The first part of the project, which was completed in the spring 2007, asked seniors themselves what they consider to be an age-friendly city, based on a series of nine questions formulated by the World Health Organization. Each city involved an interactive team of seniors, following various income and gender-specific rules, and called on them to identify what age-friendly is. The report containing those answers, along with the finding of the other 32 communities across the globe, will be sent to the World Health Organization for inclusion in an Age-Friendly Cities guidebook.

Cities in the project include Tokyo, New York, Rio de Janeiro, and Edinburgh. Participating cities used the same protocol to conduct the

research on age-friendly environments in their communities. Three other Canadian communities were chosen to participate, Sherbrooke, Quebec; Portage le Prairie, Manitoba; and Sanich, British Columbia.

The World Health Organization's Age-Friendly Cities Project is intended to develop guidelines for cities to use worldwide. The Nova Scotia Centre on Aging at Mount Saint Vincent University conducted the Halifax Regional Municipality's portion of the WHO's research project, meeting with local seniors, caregivers and community leaders to figure out what qualities would make a community age-friendly.

The World Health Organization asked participating communities to look at issues related health, safety, independence, and participation in the community. Things such as leisure programs, affordable and accessible seniors' housing, accessibility to public and private spaces and employment opportunities are all being examined.

The World Health Organization is compiling the results from each city into a practical age-friendly guidebook, which will be released in London, England on October 1, International Day of the Older Person. Carolyn Bolivar-Getson, Minister of Seniors and Peter Kelly, HRM Mayor are planning to be in London for the guidebook's release.

We often take for granted the very things that most deserve our gratitude.

– Cynthia Ozick

2007 Federal Budget: Increased Age Limit for RRSPs and RPPs

By Joan Mikkleson

The recently passed 2007 Federal Budget included the following changes:

- Increased age limit for Registered Retirement Savings Plans (RRSPs) and Registered Pension Plans (RPPs)
- Splitting pension income
- Phased retirement
- Qualified RRSP investments

Let's look at the first of these changes to see what it means.

Increased age limit for RRSPs and RPPs

Prior to this budget, RRSPs and RPPs matured on December 31 of the year of the annuitant's 69th birthday – meaning that no more contributions were allowed and withdrawals (payments) must begin. At maturity, RRSPs are generally converted to either Registered Retirement Income Funds (RRIFs) or annuities, and RPP payments must commence. The maturity date for these plans has been extended to December 31 of the year of the annuitant's 71st birthday.

What does this mean for RRSPs?

- If an annuitant turns 69 in 2007, it means that he/she is no longer required to convert his/her RRSP to a RRIF or annuity before December 31, 2007. Actually, he/she can make additional contributions for 2007, 2008, and 2009 (provided unused contribution room is available) before

converting the RRSP to a RRIF or annuity before December 31 of the year of his/her 71st birthday.

- If an annuitant turns 70 in 2007, his/her RRIF can be converted back to a RRSP (or a new RRSP can be opened) and he/she can make additional contributions for 2007 and 2008 (provided unused contribution room is available) before converting the RRSP to a RRIF or annuity before December 31 of the year of his/her 71st birthday. Or the RRIF can be left as is, with the request that required withdrawals be waived for 2007 and 2008.
- If an annuitant turns 71 in 2007, he/she can convert a RRIF back to a RRSP (or a new RRSP can be opened) and make additional contributions for 2007 (provided unused contribution room is available) before converting the RRSP to a RRIF or annuity before December 31, or leave his/her RRIF as is and request that required withdrawals be waived for 2007.

I would suggest that you discuss your RRSP and/or RRIF with your financial advisor to ensure that your needs and these recent changes are taken into consideration.

And for RPPs?

For RPPs, benefits can continue to accrue and contributions can be made for 2007 for employees who are 71 years of age or younger.

Families, Relationships, and Financial Senior Abuse

The abuse of any older person is difficult to understand. Ageism (discrimination against older persons based on their age) often contributes to senior abuse. The myths and misunderstandings which exist about aging – regarding declining capabilities, health, interest, and understanding of events or situations – must be questioned, recognizing that each person ages differently.

All adults have the right to make their own decisions, to be regarded with patience and compassion, dignity and respect, to receive health care, medications, personal assistance, and privacy, with whom to socialize and how they choose and to make their own financial decisions. Abuse is not uncommon in families or other close relationships and does occur despite a person's education, financial status, cultural background or traditions.

Seniors can encounter physical, sexual, emotional/verbal abuse, neglect, violation of rights, and financial abuse. It is often said that "money is the root of all evil". The most commonly reported and challenging form of abuse is related to property, material goods, money and investments, banking, and related legal arrangements. Some older persons may be more vulnerable to abuse due to lack of experience with financial matters (e.g. a husband always managed things) or because they are experiencing poor health or additional stress in their life.

Wills, power of attorney, pensions/cheques, and living expenses for the older person can frequently become a source of conflict within families and lead to situations of senior abuse.

Recognizing the influences of family

relationships and the various causes of conflict can help us better understand abuse of a senior in a family. It is important to realize that abuse may not be intentional – family members may feel they are actually helping the older person. Abuse can occur when emotions escalate due to expectations of an individual or family member that are different from the understanding of the senior or other family members.

Previous issues of dependency, power and control, disputes or misunderstandings, domestic abuse, and poor or inappropriate attitudes, and patterns of behaviour toward one another can confuse present day events and increase conflict. To further complicate the situation, family members with financial difficulties, mental health issues, limited social supports, substance (alcohol) abuse and/or other addictions, police arrests, and/or poor employment records can increase anxiety in discussions about money.

If there has been a history of rivalry between siblings or expectations that one would receive a particular object, amount of money or property, or recognition from the older person, then anger, resentment, hurtful actions or accusations and confusion can occur. Pressure or intimidation, making the senior feel guilty or threatening the older person is frequently reported in these situations.

The senior in the family will often be apprehensive that they will cause further family distress and greater conflict by discussing financial concerns. The senior may worry about how her or his own relationships and well-being will be affected and will want to "keep the peace". The rights and best interests of the senior – including their safety, comfort, and contentment in their life – must be acknowledged and maintained.

Consultation with a lawyer is advised for any legal documents or transactions and professional counseling can be helpful when addressing family problems.

Ultimately, the importance of respect for each person in a relationship and the need to discuss issues calmly and reasonably – and before a crisis occurs – are necessary to avoid family difficulties and possible abuse. This is the responsibility of every family member, including the senior.

It is important for the older person to be aware that they can often avoid disputes and misunderstandings by discussing their future

The Nova Scotia Seniors' Secretariat is pleased to introduce a new province-wide resource

Senior Abuse Line

1-877-833-3377

Providing information, referral, and support to seniors and others... a place people can call for information or simply to talk to someone about their situation.

The Senior Abuse Line is available
Monday to Friday
8:30 am to 4:30 pm

plans or wishes with their family. The senior's ability to express her or his wishes as well as the manner in which family members interact or deal with conflict is of great significance in avoiding further problems.

For information on senior abuse or to talk to someone about a situation of abuse, call the Seniors' Secretariat's Senior Abuse Line at **1-877-833-3377**. The Secretariat's website also has more information on senior abuse **www.gov.ns.ca/scs/elderabuse.asp**

Safer Streets and Communities in Nova Scotia

Crime rates in Nova Scotia may have may have decreased in the past few years, but we still remain highest among Atlantic Provinces and marginally higher than Canada's overall crime rate. Reports of street crime, negative impacts of illegal drug use, incidents of property crimes, violence against women and children, robberies and homicides are still issues of concern to Nova Scotians.

Governments concern for these crimes and their affects on Nova Scotians resulted in a report titled *Safer Streets and Communities*. The report, which was release in May, began last year when Justice Minister Murray Scott announced the creation of a new task force on Safer Streets and Communities.

The task force was implemented to look at community programs, government services, legislation, and policing best practices to identify and promote programs that are making a positive impact in communities.

Twenty five members were appointed from diverse backgrounds including geographic and cultural diversity, youth, law enforcement, community development, education, and victims of crime.

In February and March, the Minister's Task Force held more than 40 meetings public meetings, focus groups across the province to gather information from the public. They also accepted written submissions.

The information gathered was used by government to develop the provincial crime prevention strategy, which outlines best practices, innovative programs, issues faced, desired outcomes, and crime prevention programs that could be implemented in Nova Scotia.

Key issues identified during consultations include the impact of youth crime and the need to ensure youth feel attached and involved in their school and communities. Participants said changing social values were contributing to crime, and need to be addressed through improved access to services, along with support to help parents supervise and appropriately discipline their children. Limitations of the Youth Criminal Justice Act were also identified as an issue.

The task force identified actions to both prevent and address crime. Among the recommended priorities are enhancing early intervention programs, improved access to recreation facilities, funding for community crime prevention groups, addressing racism, adding police officers, and stiffer sentencing.

For more information on the task force, please visit the Department of Justice website **www.gov.ns.ca/just/minister/safer_streets.asp**.

Broadband in Rural Nova Scotia

The Nova Scotia government is embarking on a bold vision to ensure that by the end of 2009, every Nova Scotian will have broadband access to the Internet. In many cases, that broadband access will be achieved through wireless connectivity.

The Province defines broadband as broadband/high speed Internet access, often shortened to "broadband Internet" or just "broadband" as a high data-transmission rate Internet connection.

The Government of Nova Scotia sees broadband access to the Internet as important today as paved roads, electricity, and telephones were in the past. Broadband access has become critical infrastructure needed to communicate, access information, and conduct trade. Broadband access is seen as critical to the sustainability and growth of our economy and quality of life.

Currently 78 per cent of Nova Scotia's population is served with broadband connectivity. However, approximately 200,000 Nova Scotians, 93,500 households, over 5,600 businesses, and thousands of tourists and summer residents do not have broadband Internet connectivity.

The unserved areas of Nova Scotia are for the most part rural communities in which the traditional broadband service providers have yet to find a business proposition that makes it viable to roll out broadband services.

A committee of provincial, federal, and community partners reviewed nominations for pilot locations. The assessment was based on specific criteria designed to ensure that the community was representative of other unserved areas in the province.

In September 2006, on behalf of the Province of Nova Scotia, the Office of Economic Development issued a request for proposal to solicit proposals from qualified service providers to supply broadband connectivity and related services in the pilot community cluster, Tidnish to Port Howe in Cumberland County.

Six proposals received are being inventoried in terms of the scope of technologies, business models, and the approaches proposed. The review project team will include the broadband project leads, technical and business model experts, and provincial, federal, and community representatives.

It is anticipated that work in all zones will begin this fall.

The success of the pilot project has shown that sustainable reliable broadband service is possible and that the technology works. With high-speed Internet service now available in the pilot area of Cumberland County, subscriptions to the new service have been increasing steadily.

For more information on the broadband initiative contact the Department of Economic Development **www.gov.ns.ca/econ** or call **(902) 424-0377.**

If we meet someone who owes us thanks, we right away remember that. But how often do we meet someone to whom we owe thanks without remembering that?

– Johann Wolfgang Von Goethe

CAREGIVING & HEALTH

Flu Season Cometh – Be Prepared

By Dr. Robert Strang
Acting Deputy Chief Medical Officer of Health

Influenza is caused by influenza A and B viruses and occurs in Canada every year, usually during the late fall and winter months. The usual symptoms of influenza are sudden onset of fever, chills, cough, sore throat, sore muscles and joints, headache, and tiredness. Influenza can cause severe illness and even death, especially in people over age 65 and those with chronic illness.

Influenza vaccination is the best way to prevent influenza and its complications. Since influenza viruses change themselves from year to year vaccination needs to be repeated every fall. In Nova Scotia the vaccine is available at no cost to people considered to be at higher risk of getting severely ill from influenza. Those at high-risk include:

- people 65 years of age or over
- people who live in nursing homes and other chronic care facilities.
- adults and children with chronic lung or heart diseases, diabetes, cancer, kidney disease, HIV, immune deficiency, anemia
- children and adolescents treated for long periods of time with aspirin
- house hold contacts of the above groups
- pregnant women
- children age 6 to 23 months of age
- health care workers (including volunteers in hospitals, long term care facilities, and home care organizations)

The only people who should not receive influenza vaccine are people who have severe or anaphylactic allergies to eggs or who have had a severe allergic reaction to a previous dose of influenza vaccine.

This year, influenza vaccine will be available at family doctor's offices and community clinics. Watch your local newspaper and listen to your local radio and TV for the dates and times and locations of community clinics in your area. Although October, November, and December are the best months to get influenza vaccine, if you miss these times it is still important to be immunized during the early winter before the influenza season arrives.

It is also important to remember that if you are in one of the high-risk groups there should be no cost at all for you to get influenza vaccine at your doctor's office or public health clinic.

Along with having high-risk people immunized, prevention of influenza in high-risk people also requires steps to reduce their exposure to influenza viruses. The main way to reduce the exposure of high-risk individuals is to immunize their close contacts – household members and care givers. If household members and care providers are not immunized against influenza then they are putting high-risk people at increased risk of influenza and its complications. Take the initiative and ask household members, as well those who provide care to you (whether it is in your home, at an office or in a facility) "have you had your flu shot?"

Along with influenza immunization, the following general steps will help you avoid influenza plus the many other viruses that are around every fall and winter.

- Wash your hands frequently with hot water and soap
- Avoid close contact with people who are coughing and sneezing
- Eat a healthy diet, exercise regularly, and get enough sleep. This helps your body to fight off infections

For more information on influenza vaccine contact your local public health office or check the following websites: **www.gov.ns.ca/hpp/ocmoh/flu.htm** or **www.influenza.cpha.ca**

Family Caregivers and the Workplace

Research done by the Healthy Balance Research Program resulted in a survey which demonstrated that an estimated 36 per cent of adults in Nova Scotia are family caregivers. They provide care to a parent, spouse, partner, child, other family members, or friend who needs extra support because of a short or a long-term condition, mental illness, frailty, or disability.

The results of the 2006 census suggest that the number of older people in our lives needing care only stands to increase. This means in the future thousands more Nova Scotians will be depended on to give care to family members or friends.

The responsibility of caregivers can be overwhelming, and combined with a full or part-time job; it can become increasingly difficult to balance roles. Offering support for caregivers in the workplace is emerging as an important aspect of how the government of Nova Scotia is supporting a healthy and accommodating work environment.

In May 2006, the Public Service Commission (PSC) piloted a program called Striking a Balance: Caregiving and the Workplace, developed and presented by CareStrategies Inc. Over the course of eight session participants learned how to identify the stresses caused by the role as caregivers, and how to use appropriate resources to develop their own caregiver's plan.

The pilot had tremendous success and participants recommend the course be expanded across the province. All the participants who took the course this past May said they would recommend the course to colleagues. Margie Johnson from the department of Transportation and Public Works was one of them.

"It was probably the most informative and useful course I've been on in years," said Ms. Johnson. "We are all either caregivers now or will be at some point in our lives, especially with our aging population. This course provides the tools to look after ourselves so that we don't burn out. At the same time, you will learn a lot about resources and how to access them."

The course is now part of the PSC's training calendar as a two-day session, and is open to all government employees, crown corporations, non-profit, government-funded organizations, municipalities, district health authorities, and regional library boards.

One very unique aspect of the course is that participants are also encouraged to bring a family member who is also in, or may be in, a caregiving role. This is offered only if spaces are remaining at the time the program is presented.

Courses for 2007 will be available on the following dates:

- Halifax:
  September 19 and 20, 2007
  November 1 and 2 2007

- Sydney:
  October 17 and 18 2007

- Middleton:
  November 21 and 22 2007

The intent of the two day session is to work toward a positive work/life balance and topics include caring for yourself, caring for others, communication, financial/legal issues, long-term planning, and the development of individual caregiver's plans. Professional and community resources will also be provided.

To register for Family Caregiving and the Workplace contact the public service commission at **registartraining@gov.ns.ca**.

Cancer Can Be Beaten

By Merlin Riley

Cancer is that dreadful disease
That we all know and fear
As we wonder if it will strike us next
And take us away from here.

If you are a person in the prime of your life
Who has never paid much attention to health
Well, now is the time to turn that around
For your body is your greatest wealth.

For a woman a simple mammogram
Will lessen some of your fears
For breast cancer has been the leading killer
Of women down through the years.

If you are a man have your prostate checked
By a doctor at least once a year
For countless men have succumbed to cancer
When early detection might have kept them here.

So whether man or woman, boy or girl
Take care of your body from birth
And insure you have regular check-ups
So your stay will be long on this earth.

But if your doctor should tell you
That you have a sickness, don't ever lose hope
For the doctors don't know everything
Just because they wear a stethoscope.

In the final analysis of things
When it comes to the end of the day
The doctors may think they know it all
But it's God who has the final say.

Tools for Life Becomes Annual, Province-wide Event

By Tarina Bambrick
Conference Coordinator
Valley Disability Partnership Society

Following the success of the inaugural event in the fall of 2006, Valley Disability Partnership Society, the Technical Resource Centre – Kings

Regional Rehabilitation Centre, the Community Education Division of Annapolis Valley Regional School Board, and the Canadian Paraplegic Association (Nova Scotia) will host the second Tools for Life Conference and Exhibit.

The event takes place at Horton High School in Greenwich between 9:00 am and 4:00 pm on Friday, October 26. The theme is Overcoming Barriers: Making Living, Learning and Working Easier.

"A lot of people loved the first conference," says Dwayne Compton, last year's coordinator and honorary chair of the Tools for Life organizing committee for 2007. "Six hundred people took part. To me, the spirit was friendly and there was a feeling of enthusiasm." Mr. Compton says the early interest seen so far this year has solidified the conference as an annual event.

What started as an idea for an expo of a dozen or so exhibitors promoting assistive technologies has quickly grown into a wider focus and a provincial scope, says Mr. Compton.

With almost 120 presentations and exhibits, the conference itself is becoming a tool to overcoming barriers, he adds. "I have been asked many times on disability issues, 'How can I get information on various disabilities? Where do I go? Who can I talk with?' I now tell people to come to the Tools for Life conference – it's all about awareness, finding information, and networking with businesses and organizations that can answer those questions."

The conference focuses on strategies and solutions, best practices and innovative approaches to assisting people in three key areas – wellness and independent living, literacy and life-long learning, and employability and career. Mr. Compton says the information is a valuable resource to anyone with a disability or health challenge, their family members and caregivers.

Mr. Compton, who became a quadriplegic from a hockey accident, says aside from barriers in paying for substantial assistive technology costs, home renovations, and education, attitude barriers can be the hardest to overcome. He says the information presented at this conference helps all citizens gain a better understanding of what persons with disabilities face in their everyday lives.

He says seniors should also find the exhibits and presentations an excellent learning opportunity, noting Nova Scotia's population is aging and must prepare for health challenges down the road.

The keynote speaker for Tools for Life is Valerie White, chief executive officer for Seniors' Secretariat, with scheduled special guest, the Honourable Judy Streatch, Minister of Community Services. All exhibits, workshops and presentations are free. Advanced registration is recommended. Registration and further information can be found at **www.nsnet.org/vdp**.

More Than Just Words: Effective Communication Techniques

Communicating with an Alzheimer's person can be challenging, but remember, decreased verbal communication does not mean decreased awareness. Most individuals are very aware and feel a great deal of distress about their increased loss of ability.

General Rules of Thumb

Reality orientation does not work. Instead, use memory aids such as labeling objects (i.e. closet, bathroom). Be aware that as Alzheimer's disease progresses, an individual's ability to name objects and use words decreases.

Simplify the environment for Alzheimer's individual. Eliminate distracting noises such as the radio or TV, or loud conversation.

Do not use the in-room intercom to communicate. The person may be frightened or confused by hearing a voice only.

Communication Tips

- Always begin by identifying yourself and calling the person's name.
- Always approach from the front.
- Maintain good eye contact.
- Use short, simple sentences.
- Speak slowly.
- Be specific. Use the name of the person or object instead of "this" or "they."
- Keep tone of voice low and pleasant.
- Keep facial expression warm and friendly.
- Use non-verbal cues: a reassuring touch, a smile, a demonstration stating the emotion.
- Give the person plenty of time to respond to your question (20 seconds).

- Always repeat your question exactly the same way.
- Use concrete language.
- State in positive terms. Constant use of "no" or commands increases resistance.
- Don't test the person's memory. Erase the words, "Don't you remember?" from your vocabulary.
- Give directions simply and one at a time.
- When helping with personal care, tell the person what you are doing each step of the way. Add occasional social or reassuring comments to avoid "task-focused talk" only.
- Do not appear rushed or tense. The person will become tense and agitated.
- Listen to the person. Try to find the key thought and take note of the feeling or emotion being expressed along with the spoken word.
- Reassure through words. Remind the person who you are and that you will take care of him or her.
- Sometimes asking a "Why" question can get to the reason behind a repetitive question and decrease its occurrence. (i.e. "Why are you concerned about what time it is?")

Reprinted with permission from the National Institute on Aging website: **www.nia.nih.gov/Alzheimers/Publications/acute.htm**

Alzheimer Disease and Other Dementia Care Course

Sept 12 – Nov 7, 2007, Bedford, Nova Scotia

One in thirteen Nova Scotians over the age of 65 have Alzheimer disease or other dementia. As of 2007 there are 14,120 Nova Scotians over the age of 65 with the disease and this number will grow as the baby boomer population ages. The increasing numbers is having a major impact on the health care system and has intensified the need for accessible, relevant education for care providers and caregivers. The Alzheimer Disease and Other Dementia Care Course (ADODCC) endeavours to meet that need with a standardized education program that enables persons caring for individuals with dementia to learn about and enhance their skills in caring for these individuals.

The course:

- Provides a holistic, person-centered philosophy to understanding dementia and how the symptoms affect behaviour.
- Focuses on strategies to help with the activities of daily living, finding the right balance between maintaining independence and offering support.
- Aids caregivers and care providers in their efforts to maintain a person's identity, dignity, and self esteem.
- Is founded on the philosophy that quality care of persons with dementia involves an interdisciplinary team approach to ensure greater communication and understanding for all those involved in the care of persons with dementia.

ADODCC is divided into nine sessions. All sessions must be attended before a certificate of completion is awarded. Learners participate in lectures, group discussions, interactive workshops, view videos, and must successfully complete a final assessment project. The cost of the course is $150. plus HST. Session dates and times are listed below.

- **Session 1: Introduction and Overview of Dementia**
  Sept 12, 9:00 am – 12:30 pm
- **Session 2: Assessment and Communication**
  Sept 19, 9:00 am – 12:30 pm
- **Session 3: Care Plans and Challenging Behaviours, Part 1**
  Sept 26, 9:00 am – 12:30 pm
- **Session 4: Challenging Behaviours, Part 2 and Therapeutic Environment**
  Oct 3, 9:00 am – 12:30 pm
- **Session 5: Recreation and Physical Design, Part 1**
  Oct 10, 1:00 pm – 4:30 pm
  (Note: afternoon only)
- **Session 6: Physical Design Part 2 and Working with Families**
  Oct 17, 9:00 am – 12:30 pm
- **Session 7: Nutrition**
  Oct 24, 9:00 am – 12:30 pm
- **Session 8: Caregiver Issues**
  Oct 31, 9:00 am–12:30 pm
- **Session 9: Special Topics, Presentations, and Evaluation**
  Nov 7, 9:00 am – 12:30 pm

For more information phone **(902) 832-8500 ex 249** or **vanda@nsaho.ns.ca**

NOTES OF INTEREST

Happy Thanksgiving Canada

Canadian Thanksgiving is celebrated on the second Monday of October. This year Thanksgiving will fall on Monday, October 8, 2007.

Thanksgiving in Canada has generally thought to come from three traditions.

In Europe, farmers held celebrations at harvest time to give thanks for their good fortune of a plentiful harvest and abundance of food. They would often fill a curved goat's horn with fruits and grains known as a cornucopia or horn of good plenty. When Europeans came to Canada it is thought to have become an influence on the Canadian Thanksgiving tradition.

In the late 1500s, Sir Martin Frobisher set out to find the Spice Islands. He landed instead on Baffin Island. Around 1578, Frobisher held a ceremony in what is now called the province of Newfoundland to give thanks for surviving his journey there. Other settlers later arrived and continued these "thankful" ceremonies. This was also thought to be an influence on the Canadian Thanksgiving tradition.

The third influence happened in 1621 in what was to become the United States. Pilgrims celebrated their first harvest in their new surroundings. Around 1750, this celebration of harvest was brought to Nova Scotia by American settlers from the south. At the same time, French settlers arriving were also holding feasts of thanksgiving. These celebrations and offerings of "thanks" influenced the Canadian Thanksgiving.

Records at Port Royal, Nova Scotia, note on October 10 a thanksgiving celebration to mark the return of the town to the English. In 1763, Halifax celebrated the end of the Seven Years War with a similar ceremony.

In 1879, Parliament formally declared November 6 as a day of thanksgiving, and so it remained until after the Armistice of WWI, when Thanksgiving and Remembrance Day would have conflicted thematically during the same week. Over the years, the date of Thanksgiving changed several times until on January 31, 1957 Parliament proclaimed... "that the second Monday in October ... be a Day of General Thanksgiving to Almighty God for the bountiful harvest with which Canada has been blessed."

Halloween Safety Tips

Halloween is a fun time for young and old, whether you're making or wearing costumes, or giving out candy these safety tips will ensure you have a safe and spooky Halloween!

Costumes

- Use costumes with bright fabrics and decorate costumes with reflective tape.
- To prevent falling, make sure costume and shoes should fit properly. Costumes should not be longer than your ankles.
- If you are making a costume, use materials such as nylons and polyesters that are more flame resistant.
- If you are buying a costume, make sure it is labeled flame resistant. This means that if the

costume catches on fire, it will burn more slowly than other materials.

- Avoid costumes with loose sleeves, pants, and skirts.
- All costume accessories such as swords or knives should be made of soft, flexible material and should not have any sharp edges.
- Wear face paint or make-up instead of a mask because it doesn't restrict your vision. If you're wearing a hat, wig, or scarf, tie it securely so that it won't slip over your eyes.

Trick or Treating

- Make your home safe for trick or treaters by removing all objects around the outside of your house that could cause people to trip or fall.
- Turn your outside light on.
- Rather than using candles to decorate pumpkins, use small inexpensive flashlights to light them safely.
- Keep lit candles out of children's reach and away from curtains and other objects that could catch fire.
- Be cautious when driving on Halloween – children are excited and may forget safety rules. Enter and exit driveways and alleyways slowly and pay extra attention

For more Halloween Safety tips visit **www.safecanada.ca** or **www.halifax.ca**

Mi'kmaq History Month

October is Mi'kmaq History Month in Nova Scotia as proclaimed in 1993 by then Premier John Savage and Mi'kmaq Grand Chief Ben Sylliboy.

Its purpose is to promote public awareness about the Mi'kmaw culture and heritage for all citizens of Nova Scotia.

In 1986, the then Grand Chief Donald Marshall Sr. proclaimed every October 1 as Treaty Day. It commemorates the key role of treaties in the relationship between the Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq and the Crown.

To commemorate this significant event we wanted to focus on the importance of elders in Mi'kmaw culture.

More information on Mi'kmaq history or general information visit Aboriginal Affairs website **www.gov.ns.ca/abor/**

Inspirational Senior: Sister Dorothy Moore

Describing the life of someone who has contributed so much to so many is a truly difficult task. As an educator, a spiritual leader, and advocate for human rights – Sister Dorothy Moore has influenced the lives of people across the country.

She is said to be one of the most influential and effective advocates for aboriginal human rights and is a recognized educator who has been instrumental in introducing Mi'kmaq history and culture into the curriculum of Nova Scotian schools.

A recipient of the Order of Nova Scotia and

the Order of Canada, she is a far cry from the stupid child her teachers referred to her as in residential school. Her life's work focuses on enriching the lives of her students, and promoting positive change within society.

Her passion for education was ignited years ago when she attended the Indian Day School at Membertou, after which she spent some time at the Indian Residential School at Shubenacadie and then, in 1949, she became the first Mi'Kmaq to attend an off-reserve school in Sydney at St. Joseph's School.

In 1954, Sister Dorothy made a life-altering decision to devout her life to God, and was accepted into the religious order of the Sisters of Saint Martha in Antigonish. Sister Dorothy was the first Nova Scoitan Mi'kmaq to be inducted into a Roman Catholic religious order.

Sister Dorothy Moore

She continued to advance her education and attended teacher's college and graduated with a teaching certificate in 1958. At that time, she taught elementary school courses in Sampsonville, Nova Scotia and Picture Butte, Alberta. During her years at Picture Butte, she was also the basketball coach.

In 1974, she began teaching at the Federal Elementary Junior School in Eskasoni where she would eventually become principal. Being a life-ling learner, she went to Saint Francis Xavier University and was awarded Bachelors of Arts and Education degree.

In 1984, she received her Masters of Education Degree from Mount Saint Vincent. She worked at what is now Cape Breton University as the Native Education Coordinator, where she set the foundation for the Mi'kmaq courses especially in Mi'kmaw history, culture, and language. She then went on to become the Director of Mi'kmaq Services for the Nova Scotia Department of Education.

Throughout her teaching career she was also dedicated to promoting social equality, especially for Mi'kmaq. She organized anti-racism forms and sat as a board member on the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission.

For her work, she has been the recipient of many prestigious awards including the Stephen Hamilton Educator of the Year Award, the Atlantic Canada Innovator of the Year Award in the category of education, and was awarded the Governor General's citation for citizenship. She has also received a honourary degree – Doctorate of Humane Letters, Honoris Causa from Mount Saint Vincent University in 2002 and received a second honorary degree at Cape

Breton University – Doctor of Laws.

Countless awards, many years of service, and her desire for the betterment of society are only a few reasons why Sister Dorothy Moore is so respected in her community and throughout the country. Her life and contributions can not be described in a one page article, but the importance of recognizing her work is what matters. She is truly an inspiration to us all.

Elders in Mi'kmaw Culture

The Mi'kmaw culture has many unique qualities, especially regarding their elders. It is important to recognize these characteristics and demonstrate respect and understanding for the way they consider seniors.

Traditionally in First Nations cultures, elders are those people, usually older, who are recognized by the community as possessing great wisdom and who are called upon as an authority to advise or act on important family and community matters.

Sister Dorothy Moore, advocate and celebrated Mi'kmaw elder says that seniors are generally known for their wisdom, good citizenship, being interested in their own culture and language, especially those who speak the language.

"Elder doesn't necessarily mean that everyone who meets that certain age is an elder, you have to be known to be a good living person, and then you are automatically looked up to," said Sister Dorothy.

Through various social issues and changes in the past few generations, the Mi'kmaw culture a suffered a loss to a valuable piece of their culture, their language. With a significant decline in those who are able to speak the language, many of their cultural practices and ways have been compromised.

Sister Dorothy Moore believes that in the past elders were even given more respect people approached them for decision making, they were the ones who helped communities to come up with decisions on what was affecting them.

Grandmothers passed on the culture through story telling and legends about how to live, and how to behave. The elders were the ones who would reprimand a young person if that person was in the wrong. Sister Dorothy believes that even some elders are forgetting the ways of the past because they are not being used and they are not being accommodated such as they were before.

Elizabeth Paul a member of the Mi'Kmaq Nation shared some of the same feelings about elders at the 5th National Indian and Inuit Community Health Representatives Committee Organization General Assembly held in Toronto in May 1997.

"In traditional Mi'Kmaw society, the traditional education system often consisted of one-to-one teaching to a student, by an elder. Elders possessed the knowledge of medicinal plants and herbal preparations.

"The elders were keepers of the culture and the language. An elder's advice was held in such esteem that young couples were able to solve marital difficulties through

the wisdom of those with more life experiences. Elders/grandparents played a major role in promoting traditional child-rearing practices."

Despite these changes and challenges, the Mi'kmaq have a culture of respect and continue to be unique in the way they uphold and care for their elders.

"Our elders are looked after in our communities. They are not sent to residences for seniors or guest homes; they are looked after in their own community by their families, extended families, or community health workers. Help is provided in their home so that elders can continue to live in their own environment so that they are not moved from their community. I think that is one of the wonderful ways of retention of something belonging to us as a first nation's culture," says Sister Dorothy Moore.

Being an elder today, Sister Dorothy Moore believes, is living honorably, being present, and supportive of the community.

"When I'm asked "Will you lead us in prayer, or say the grace for this meal, or begin this meeting with a prayer," I appreciate that I am being recognized for spirituality and because of the fact that I am an elder. I try to be conscious whenever I speak that I am speaking as a person who is expected to speak with respect, honour and with wisdom."

The roles of the elder may have changed over the generations, but the Mi'kmaw culture remains respectful and understands the importance that elders have in their communities.

Elizabeth Paul's excerpt comes from *Our Nations Elders Speak II*, InTouch, v. 8, Number 1 Spring 1997. Reprinted with permission

Teaching Children to Use 911

Parents and grandparents can use the following safety tips to teach their children the proper way to use 9-1-1 to report emergencies:

- Never say "nine eleven." There is no eleven on a telephone keypad or dial. Always say "nine-one-one."
- Always call from a safe place. If there is a fire in the house, get out first and then call.
- Post your address near the phone.
- Never call 9-1-1 as a prank or joke. You can get into trouble and keep someone who really needs help from getting it in time.

- 9-1-1 is not for animal emergencies. Call your vet or the animal control centre.
- Call 9-1-1 if you think you have an emergency and explain the situation to the dispatcher.
- If you call 9-1-1 by mistake, don't hang up. Explain the mistake to the dispatcher and say there is no emergency.

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www.gov.ns.ca/just/911.htm

Freckles

Author unknown

An elderly woman and her little grandson, whose face was sprinkled with bright freckles, spent the day at the zoo. Lots of children were waiting in line to get their cheeks painted by a local artist who was decorating them with tiger paws.

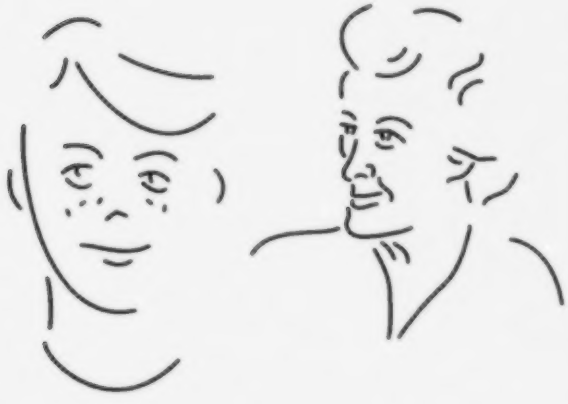
"You've got so many freckles, there's no place to paint!" a girl in the line said to the little fella.

Embarrassed, the little boy dropped his head. His grandmother knelt down next to him. "I love your freckles. When I was a little girl I always wanted freckles," she said, while tracing her finger across the child's cheek. "Freckles are beautiful."

The boy looked up, "Really?"

"Of course," said the grandmother. "Why just name me one thing that's prettier than freckles."

The little boy thought for a moment, peered intensely into his grandma's face, and softly whispered, "Wrinkles."



Belief

A man was lost while driving through the country. As he tried to read a map, he accidentally drove off the road into a ditch.

Though he wasn't injured, his car was stuck deep in mud. So the man walked to a nearby farm to ask for help.

"Warwick can get you out of that ditch," said the farmer, pointing to an old mule standing in a field. The man looked at the decrepit old mule and looked at the farmer who just stood there repeating, "Yep, old Warwick can do the job."

The man figured he had nothing to lose. The two men and the mule made their way back to the ditch.

The farmer hitched the mule to the car. With a snap of the reins he shouted, "Pull, Fred! Pull, Jack! Pull, Ted! Pull, Warwick!" And the mule pulled that car right out of the ditch.

The man was amazed. He thanked the farmer, patted the mule, and asked, "Why did you call out all of those other names before you called Warwick?"

The farmer grinned and said, "Old Warwick is just about blind. As long as he believes he's part of a team, he doesn't mind pulling."

Adapted from *Some Folks Feel the Rain; Others Just Get Wet*, by James W. Moore

Feeling gratitude and not expressing it is like wrapping a present and not giving it.

– William Arthur Ward

Getting Old

Author unknown

Do you realize that the only time in our lives when we like to get old is when we're kids? If you're less than ten years old, you're so excited about aging that you think in fractions. "How old are you?" "I'm four and a half." You're never 36-and-a-half...you're four-and-a-half going on 5.

You get into your teens; now they can't hold you back. You jump to the next number. "How old are you?" "I'm gonna be 16." You could be 12, but you're gonna be 16. Eventually.

Then the great day of your life; you become 21. Even the words sound like a ceremony. You BECOME 21...Yes!!

Then you turn 30. What happened there? Makes you sound like bad milk. He *turned*; we had to throw him out. What's wrong? What changed?

You *become* 21; you *turn* 30.

Then you're *pushing* 40...stay over there.

You *reach* 50.

Then you *make it* to 60.

By then you've built up so much speed, you *hit* 70. After that, it's a day by day thing. You *hit* Wednesday. You get into your 80s; you *hit* lunch, you *hit* 4:30.

And it doesn't end there. Into the 90s, you start going backwards. "I was *just* 92." Then a strange thing happens; if you make it over 100, you become a little kid again. "I'm 100 and a half."

Do you have any... ideas?

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Gratitude is the inward feeling of kindness received. Thankfulness is the natural impulse to express that feeling. Thanksgiving is the following of that impulse.

– Henry Van Dyke

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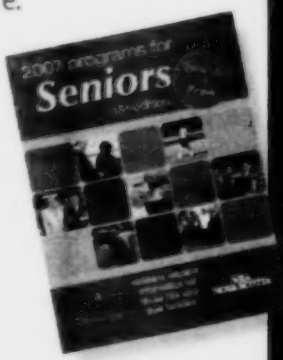

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